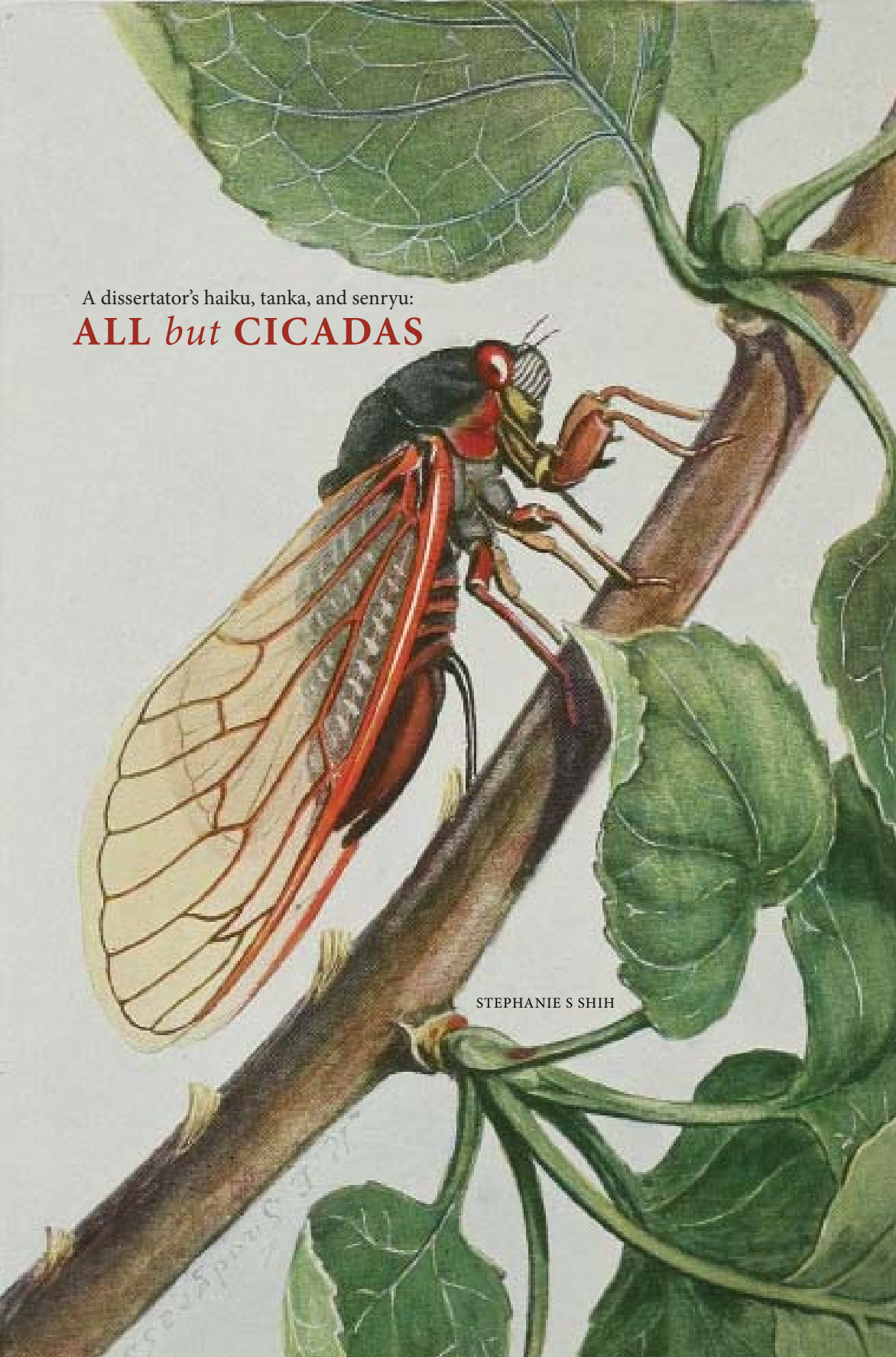


A dissertator's haiku, tanka, and senryu:
ALL *but* CICADAS

STEPHANIE S SHIH



All but Cicadas.



*A dissertator's
haiku, tanka, and senryu:*

All but Cicadas.

Stephanie S Shih

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Preface

The following poems
were composed over the course
of thesis writing,

mostly during the summer
of two thousand and thirteen.

I.

Grad school has sucked all
the words out of me.
I am left with just three lines.

II.

A dissertator's
cries crash silent upon the
stone-eared committee.

III.

To do list

Sometimes I think of
all I haven't yet finished.
hyperventilates

IV.

On conference abstracts

Abstract accepted!
Crap—now I actually
have to do the work.

V.

Corpus work

Dear natural data:
Why am I so constantly
cleaning up *your* mess?

VI.

The white whale

When my statistics
confirm my hypothesis:
Victory is mine!

VII.

Research in the digital age

I kinda want to
kick you if your article
isn't on the net.

But I guess I'll settle for
just not citing you instead.

VIII.

Writing a frustrating section

Furiously slow,
I deconstruct, reconstruct.
Writing over and

over and over and o-
ver and over again. Sigh.

IX.

Committee meeting.
Like winter: bone-chillingly
cold, and far too long.

X.

Literature review

The literature
is too vast. Cannot poss'bly
summarize it all.

That god for *inter alia*,
e.g., and (my fav) *et seq.*

XI.

Literature review, 2

The literature
written before is vast. But,
let's get to the point.

XII.

Imperatives from the advisor:
8 August 2013

“Schedule your defense!”
“Just turn in a crummy draft!”
“Revise it later!”

XIII.

How to (A reverse tanka)

Once, I asked Kie Zuraw how
she does it all. Her one tip

for academic
survival: “Lower *all* of
your expectations.”

XIV.

*Norvin Richards,
on finishing dissertations*

Richards, to me: “You
don’t finish a thesis. You
just run out of time.”

XV.

MFK Fisher
said: "Let your words go. They'll soon
be wrapped 'round dead fish."

(Or, they'll soon be scratch paper
for drawing OT tableaux.)

XVI.

Technological unadvancements

Dear Frank Harrell: Thanks
but no thanks for rms.
Bring back Design, *please?*

XVII.

The drip

Why is it always
that coffee I drink at 9
never hits 'til 3?

#superhypercaffeinatedexpialidocious

XVIII.

*Things that make me happy
while dissertating: 16 August 2013*

Emails from colleagues
about music and cronuts;
Citing stats papers;

Mottled light; working outside
with a good friend from SD.

XIX.

*On surviving the dissertation defense
(advice from Nathan Schneider)*

“Bake something sticky
for your committee, so they
won’t be able to

utter their criticisms.
Caramel should do the trick.”

XX.

Sunday, 6AM:
Morning stillness, outside and
on my gchat list.

XXI.

Re: Douglas Bates

Wondering if my
committee will throw a fit
if I don't report

p -values for mixed models?
It's the principle of it.

XXII.

The never-ending chapter, 1

Fifty-four pages
(single-spaced), and still not done.
One-chapter thesis?

XXIII.

The never-ending chapter, 2

Fifty-five pages
(single-spaced), and still I've got
three whole sections more.

XXIV.

The never-ending chapter, 3

Fifty-six pages,
Section 6.3.4.
Deep breath, and... ..go!

XXV.

On sleep

A wondrous thing, this
full night's sleep! I'd forgotten
what it's like to dream.

XXVI.

Trees fall in silence.
I do not exist between
the moments with you.

XXVII.

*Things that make me happy
while dissertating: 26 August 2013*

Facebook photos from
colleagues of cronut shops named
“La Cornetteria.”

XXVIII.

BKY → DAV

I don't understand
people who work on trains. Trains
are for day dreaming.

XXIX.

Inception

Rob pointed out that
Chapter 4 is a thesis
within a thesis.

XXX.

While I sleep, the elves
in my computer test my
maximal random

intercepts and slopes for me.
Thank you for your hard work, elves.

XXXI.

*Dissertation distractions
on a Friday morning*

Flat tire, burst pipe,
travel logistics, and still
no housing for Fall.

XXXII.

Speed

Med school friend writes three
pages in the time I write
one paragraph. #sad

XXXIII.

Google-hupf

Today's diversion:
argument on facebook re:
"kugelhupf" spelling.

XXXIV.

Upon hearing Matt's defense

Worried cause I don't
have a theoretical
implementation.

XXXV.

It's quite hard not to
feel like a constant failure
when I'm thesis-ing.

XXXVI.

Not finished yet

Incomplete drafts and
incomplete thoughts and incom-
plete senryu and

XXXVII.

Perks of the dissertation diet

Why, hello, awesome
pair of designer jeans from
the start of grad school.

(Seriously, I should patent
this thesis weight loss diet.)

XXXVIII.

The magic trick

in which I'll now pull
a dissertation out of
thin air in a week.

XXXIX.

*Upon hearing that I only have
48 hours in which to produce a full draft*

As Jen Hay once said,
“Don’t worry. We specialize
in miracles here.”

XL.

Scholarly Schadenfreude

That glimmer of glee
whenever I spot typos
in published papers.

XLI.

The cake is a lie.

Cake, and grief counsel,
will be available at
the end of the test.

#parallelsbetweenPortal
anddissertationwriting

XLII.

Every. single. year.

It's "100 words
or *fewer*." *NOT* "100
words or *less*," damnit!

re: the LSA abstract
notification email.

XLIII.

It's true what they say

You never know what
your dissertation's about
until the very end.

XLIV.

Dear Santa, My Christmas List:

Model convergence,
A finished chapter, and news
from the job market.

XLV.

LSA 2014

Clues your talk was good:
Mark Liberman's there and says
after: "Hey, good talk."

XLVI.

Reason #2394871927

I would not make a
good academic because
I. HATE. REVISIONS.

XLVII.

Can't stop

So desperate to
finish that I'm listening
to Miley Cyrus.

XLVIII.

The meat market

Relief: the one and
only emotion I feel
upon job success.

XLIX.

Unfortunate fact of life

No matter how great
the accomplishment, merit
still can't buy one love.

L.

On Pi Day, 2014

Filed! In one word,
How I plan to celebrate
having finished: *sleep*.

And now, the sequel:
(Euphemistically)
The Merry Stroll to Tenure.